## REMARKS

No claims are canceled, amended or added in this paper. Therefore, claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-20, 58-61 and 71-75 are pending and are under active consideration.

In the Advisory Action dated August 5, 2004, the Patent Office states the following:

> Applicant comments that, "instead, the Mickols ref discloses grafting or covalently bonding polyalkylene oxides directly to functional groups of the polyamide layer". How is this different from the "crosslinking compound differing from the polyamide layer"?

In reply, Applicants note that the hydrophilic coating of, for example, claim 1 is a water-insoluble polymer formed by applying a quantity of a polyfunctional epoxy compound to a polyamide layer and then cross-linking the polyfunctional epoxy compound by **self-polymerization** and/or by using **a cross-linking compound that is not the polyamide layer**. By contrast, Mickols does not teach or suggest cross-linking polyalkylene oxide compounds by **self-polymerization** of the polyalkylene oxide compounds nor does Mickols teach or suggest cross-linking its polyalkylene oxide compounds by the use of **a cross-linking compound that is not the polyamide layer**. Instead, the only arguable "coupling" of one polyalkylene oxide compound to another polyalkylene oxide compound in Mickols is through the very same polyamide layer to which the polyalkylene oxide compounds are independently bonded. In other words, other than the polyamide layer, no other compound in Mickols can be said to cross-link the polyalkylene oxide compounds. Therefore, it cannot be said that the polyalkylene oxide compounds of Mickols are cross-linked through at least one of **self-polymerization** and the use of a cross-linking compound **that differs from the polyamide layer**.

One consequence of the fact that the polyalkylene oxide compounds of Mickols are covalently bonded directly to the polyamide layer and not to each other through self-polymerization or with a cross-linking compound that is not the polyamide layer is that the quantity of polyalkylene oxide compound that can be bonded to the polyamide layer is dependent upon the quantity of functional groups in the polyamide layer that are available for bonding. Such a quantity of functional groups available for bonding is typically relatively small. By contrast, because the polyfunctional epoxy compounds of the claimed coating are cross-linked to one another and need not be bonded to the polyamide membrane, the quantity of compound that can be applied to the membrane is much greater.

Claim 58 is patentable over the applied combination of references for similar reasons to those discussed above for claim 1. In addition, as noted above, Mickols discloses a composite polyamide membrane in which polyalkylene oxide compounds are covalently bonded to a polyamide layer. Claim 58, however, recites that the hydrophilic coating is applied **directly** to the microporous support. Consequently, Mickols differs from the claimed membrane in that Mickols does not include a hydrophilic coating of the type claimed applied **directly** to the microporous support. (In fact, because the polyalkylene oxide compounds of Mickols are covalently bonded to functional groups in the polyamide layer, there would have been no reason for one ordinary skill in the art to have modified Mickols to remove the polyamide layer since the microporous support has substantially fewer functional groups for bonding the polyalkylene oxide compounds.)

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, the foregoing rejection should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this paper that are not accounted for, the Examiner is authorized to charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 11-1755. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 that is not accounted for already, such an extension of time is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on September 3, 2004.

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